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**UPDATED: 3:26 PM**

## Louisville pursuing FFA convention

By Sheldon S. Shafer  
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The Courier-Journal



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Louisville is trying to get the National FFA Organization to give the city another whirl as the home of its annual meeting.

The city lost the convention that draws up to 60,000 young people interested in careers in agribusiness to Indianapolis in 2006, after hosting it for seven years.

The teenagers who attend, wearing dark blue corduroy jackets

with FFA emblems on them, pump as much as \$30 million into the local economy of the host city during most of a week in late October.

The FFA is committed to the Hoosier capital through 2012, but the organization's board will decide in October 2008 where it will convene for at least seven years and possibly for as long as 10 years, starting in 2013.

Fourteen cities have indicated they plan to make proposals by May 11 for serving as the FFA host city.

Louisville's "odds of getting it" are at least 50-50 in the view of Linda Edwards, vice president of sales and marketing for the Kentucky State Fair Board. Louisville will bid to have the convention for 10 years, officials said.

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"We've got a chance," said Jim Wood, president of the Greater Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau, which is assembling the bid. Wood said he plans to drive to Indianapolis with Louisville's offer on May 11.

He said he believes the FFA would like to stay in the Midwest, where many of its members live, and that the chief competition may come from Indianapolis; Columbus, Ohio; Nashville, Tenn.; and St. Louis.

The FFA opted to make the change to Indianapolis, citing a lack of hotel rooms in Louisville as the main reason for the move. At the time, some people attending the Louisville convention were staying in motels and hotels as far away as Elizabethtown and Shelbyville; Jefferson County has since added 2,000 rooms to its inventory.

Reporter Sheldon S. Shafer can be reached at (502) 582-7089.

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Louisville LOVES those navy-blue jackets! It will be an HONOR to once again get to host and entertain these terrific young people. Our welcome mat is out.

Posted: Thu May 03, 2007 2:56 pm

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